

Disney Firms Up Plans for Resort Near Tahoe

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Walt Disney Productions has firmed up plans to develop a major summer and winter resort on Independence Lake, north of the Lake Tahoe area.

A joint venture agreement with the two major landowners in the area, was announced by Disney Tuesday.

If the project proves feasible and clears all environmental hurdles, Disney would build and operate the development with Southern Pacific Land Co. and Sierra Pacific Power Co., who own 9,500 acres, as limited partners in the venture.

At the earliest, Disney officials said a winter ski and summer resort area, primarily aimed at families, could be ready by 1978.

They said the resort could be built entirely on private property but some of the 10,000 acres of adjacent Forest Service land might be needed for skiing and hiking.

The Forest Service is making a land-use study of the little Truckee River Basin but does not expect to complete it before 1975. Disney also will have to

produce an environmental impact statement to meet state requirements.

The 10-year effort by Disney to develop Mineral King Valley in the Sierra Nevada has been frustrated by court suits filed by conservationists, and Disney officials started looking for another area when it seemed that project would be delayed indefinitely.

As reported in May, their attention had turned toward the Independence Lake area 10 miles north of Truckee where the large amount of private land available lessened the need to deal with governmental agencies.

At Mineral King, Disney had to negotiate with the Forest Service which controlled the valley, the Park Service which controlled access across Sequoia National Park and the state which would have built the highway.

A village with a western theme is planned for the Lake Independence area but the size of the project will not be determined until further studies are made.

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